

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Claims 1-24 (Canceled)

1        25. (**new**) Method for the mechanised manufacture of tied dough blanks composed of  
2        dough strands, in particular of pretzel blanks, wherein in a first step a dough strand (46) is  
3        received by the dough strand ends (46a) by a tying head (9) of a dough-tying device,  
4        which is in a gripping position (48), wherein in a second step the dough strand (46) is  
5        stretched in its longitudinal direction by a degree of stretch (d), the tying head (9) with  
6        the dough strand ends (46a) is moved from the gripping position (48) into a stretching  
7        position (49), and the dough strand intermediate section is held between the dough strand  
8        ends (46a) by means of a stationary stop (5, 6), wherein in a third step the tying head (9)  
9        is moved into a tying position (51) or is rotated, the dough strand (46) being tied, and  
10      wherein in a fourth step the tying head (9) is moved into a depositing position (52) in  
11      which the dough strand ends are deposited on the rest of the dough strand,  
12      characterised in that:  
13              in the second step a control which may be set by programme and/or circuit  
14              technology is used with an actuator (15) for the tying head (9), in the case of  
15              which control or actuator the degree of stretch (d) may be preset in a variable  
16              manner.

1        26. (**new**) Method for the mechanised manufacture of tied dough blanks composed of  
2        dough strands, in particular of pretzel blanks, wherein in a first step a dough strand (46) is

3 received by the dough strand ends (46a) by a tying head (9) of a dough tying device,  
4 which is in a gripping position (48), wherein in a second step the dough strand (46) is  
5 stretched in its longitudinal direction by a degree of stretch (d), the tying head (9) with  
6 the dough strand ends (46a) is moved from the gripping position (48) into a stretching  
7 position (49), and the dough strand intermediate section is held between the dough strand  
8 ends (46a) by means of a stationary stop (5, 6), wherein in a third step the tying head (9)  
9 is moved into a tying position (51) and/or is rotated, the dough strand (46) being tied, and  
10 wherein in a fourth step the tying head (9) is moved into a depositing position (52) in  
11 which the dough strand ends are deposited on the rest of the dough strand, characterised  
12 in that:

13 by means of one or more sensors (38, 39) the dough strand ends (46a) of the  
14 dough strands (46) are detected in a measuring position located upstream of the  
15 gripping position (48) viewed in the conveying direction (35), and thereupon the  
16 grasping of the dough strand ends by the tying head (9) is triggered.

1 27. **(new)** Method according to claim 25 or 26, characterised in that a tension generated  
2 during the second or stretching step is maintained in the dough strand (46) during the  
3 third or tying step wholly or in part.

1    28. (**new**) Method according to claim 27, characterised in that in order to maintain this  
2    tension in the third step, knot-tying guide means (10, 11) are used, which form a guide  
3    passage.

1    29. (**new**) Method according to claim 27, characterised in that in the second or stretching  
2    step, the tying head (9) with the dough strand ends (46a) is removed (50) from the stop  
3    (5, 6) in or according to a dough strand conveying direction (35).

1    30. (**new**) Method according to claim 28, characterised in that in the course of removal  
2    (50), a component of motion transverse to the dough strand conveying direction (35) is  
3    superimposed on the tying head (9).

1    31. (**new**) Method according to claim 28, characterised in that in the third step, in order to  
2    reach the tying position (51), the tying head (9) is moved (23) with the dough strand ends  
3    (46a) counter to the dough strand conveying direction (35).

1    32. (**new**) Method according to claim 28, characterised in that in the fourth step, in order  
2    to reach the depositing position (52), the tying head (9) with the dough strand ends (46a)  
3    is moved (53) counter to the dough strand conveying direction (35).

1       33. (**new**) Method according to claim 32, characterised in that in the course of reaching  
2       (53) the depositing position (52) a component of motion transverse to the dough strand  
3       conveying direction (35) is superimposed on the tying head (9) in order to approach the  
4       dough strand intermediate section between the dough strand ends (46a).

1       34. (**new**) Apparatus for the mechanised manufacture of tied dough products, in  
2       particular pretzels, comprising:

3             (a) a shaping table (2) for the support of a curved dough strand (46) with an  
4               activatable shaping tool (6) for the abutment of the curved dough strand (46)  
5               transverse to the support direction, wherein the shaping table (2) and the activated  
6               shaping tool (6) form a common shaping stop for the curved dough strand (46),  
7               wherein the common shaping stop is formed stationary or fixed with respect to a  
8               dough strand conveying direction (35); and

9             (b) a tying head (9) for grasping the dough strand ends and tying the dough strand  
10              (46), wherein the tying head (9) is so guided and connected to one or more actuators  
11              that the tying head (9) is movable from a gripping position (48) in which the dough  
12              strand ends of the curved dough strand (46) are grasped, to a stretching position  
13              (49) in which the dough strand (46) is stretchable in combination with the stop,  
14       characterised in that

15              one (15) of the actuators (15; 27, 28) of the tying head (9) is so arranged by circuit  
16              or programming technology that the tying head (9) may be moved from the

17           gripping position (48) into a stretching position (49) which may be preset in a  
18           variable manner.

1       35. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 34, characterised in that the actuator (15)  
2       arranged by circuit or programming technology for presetting the stretching position (49)  
3       in a variable manner is guided parallel to the conveying direction (35) and is formed with  
4       an electric servo or stepper motor (16).

1       36. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 35, characterised in that the actuator (15) has a  
2       linear guide (18, 19) which is coupled (17,22) to the servo or stepper motor (16) and  
3       which extends parallel to the dough strand conveying direction (35) and beyond an outlet  
4       of the shaping table (2) facing in the conveying direction (35).

1       37. (**new**) Apparatus for the mechanised manufacture of tied dough products, in particular  
2       pretzels, comprising:  
3           (a) a shaping table (2) for supporting a curved dough strand (46);  
4           (b) an activatable shaping tool (6) for the abutment of the curved dough strand (46)  
5           transverse to the support direction, wherein the shaping table (2) and the activated  
6           shaping tool (6) form a common shaping stop for the curved dough strand (46),  
7           wherein the common shaping stop is formed stationary or fixed with respect to a  
8           dough strand conveying direction (35); and

9       (c) a tying head (9) for grasping the dough strand ends and tying the dough strand  
10      (46), wherein the tying head (9) is so guided and connected to one or more  
11      actuators (15; 27, 28) that the tying head (9) is movable from a gripping position  
12      (48) in which the dough strand ends of the curved dough strand (46) are grasped,  
13      to a stretching position (49) in which the dough strand (46) is stretchable in  
14      combination with the stop,  
15      characterised in that  
16      in order to detect the dough strand ends (46a) of the curved dough strands (46)  
17      one or more sensors (38, 39) are provided, whose measuring positions are  
18      upstream of the gripping position (48) in the conveying direction (35).

1       38. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 37, characterised in that the respective measuring  
2      position of the sensor(s) (38, 39) is formed on the shaping table (2).

1       39. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 38, characterised by a sensor measuring position  
2      such that the dough strand ends (46a) of the curved dough strand (46) lying on the  
3      shaping table (2) may be detected by the sensors (38, 39).

1       40. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the shaping table has one or more  
2      conveying strands (3, 4) and associated deflection sheaves around which the conveyor  
3      strands pass, characterised in that the sensor(s) (38, 39) are disposed immediately above

4 the one or more deflection sheaves of the conveyor strands (3, 4) positioned to the rear in  
5 the conveying direction (35).

1 41. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, characterised in that the tying head (9) is so  
2 guided and connected to the actuator(s) (15) that the tying head (9) may be moved (23)  
3 from the stretching position into a tying position (51) in which the dough strand may be  
4 knotted.

1 42. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, characterised in that the tying head (9) is so  
2 guided and connected to the actuator(s) (15) that the tying head (9) may be moved (53)  
3 from the tying position (51) into a depositing position (52) in which the dough strand  
4 ends may be deposited on the dough strand intermediate section.

1 43. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, characterised in that the shaping tool (6),  
2 with pins (5) or other holding bodies, may be moved steadily in or counter to the dough  
3 strand conveying direction (35) and only in one direction (44, 45) transverse or oblique  
4 thereto.

1 44. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, characterised in that two sensors (38, 39) are  
2 disposed at the sides of the shaping table (2) diametrically opposed or otherwise opposite  
3 one another, so that a measuring line or a measuring plane is formed at least in parts

4 parallel to the shaping table (2) and transverse or oblique to the dough strand conveying  
5 direction (35), the sensors (38, 39) being disposed in the starting region or in the last half  
6 of the shaping table (2) in the conveying direction (35).

1 45. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the actuators (15, 16; 25; 27, 28) of  
2 the tying head (9) comprise a rotary drive (25), characterised in that the rotary drive (25)  
3 is formed to be programme-controlled with a servo or stepper motor.

1 46. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the actuators (15, 16, 17; 25; 27, 28)  
2 of the tying head (9) comprise a rotary drive (25), characterised in that its axis of rotation  
3 (57) is formed as an endless rotary axis and permits rotation of the tying head (9) through  
4 360° and/or 720° or through plural revolutions, a rotary duct being provided for passing  
5 through the control signals and supply currents for the tying head or its rotary drive (25).

1 47. (**new**) Apparatus according to claim 40, characterised in that the actuator(s) (15; 25;  
2 27, 28) are connected to a control, which is so arranged in terms of circuit or programme  
3 technology that sets of parameters may be stored and retrieved, which comprise the  
4 number of rotations of a rotary drive (25) for the tying head (9) or the degree of stretch  
5 (d) or the coordinates of a gripping, stretching, tying or depositing position for the  
6 actuator (15).

- 1    48. (new) Apparatus according to claim 47, characterised in that the control is so formed
- 2    by circuit and/or programme technology that all or some of the control parameter sets
- 3    mentioned are referenced via a dough product encryption key.